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Muḥkamāt wa-Mutashābihāt see

AMBIGUOUS; EXEGESIS OF THE QUR'ĀN:

CLASSICAL AND MEDIEVAL; VERSES

Mule see ANIMAL LIFE

Mu'minīn see BELIEF AND UNBELIEF

Murder

The unlawful killing of a human being with malicious forethought. The Qur'ān uses the verb *qatala* to denote "kill" as well as "murder." In the latter sense it is used to describe both infanticide (q.v.), as in Q 6:140: "Lost are they who slay their children (q.v.) out of folly and ignorance (q.v.)," and the intentional killing of another without legal right, such as in Q 5:32: "Whosoever kills another — unless for murder or highway robbery (*fasād fi l-ard*, see THEFT; CORRUPTION) — it is as though he has killed the entirety of humanity." The penalty for the latter is the death of the murderer at the option of the victim's next of kin, as in Q 17:33: "Nor take life — which God has made sacred — except for just cause. And if anyone is mur-

dered, we have given his heir authority [to demand *qiyās* or to forgive].” If they choose not to exercise this right, they are entitled to compensation, *diyya*, as in Q 2:178, “If any remission is by the deceased’s heir [lit. “brother”; see INHERITANCE], then reasonable demands are granted and generous compensation is his due” (see BLOODSHED; BLOOD MONEY; KINSHIP; BOUNDARIES AND PRECEPTS).

According to the Qur’ān, intentional murder is second only to associating other deities with God in terms of its sinfulness (see SIN, MAJOR AND MINOR; IDOLATRY AND IDOLATERS). Indeed, it is the only sin other than polytheism (see POLYTHEISM AND ATHEISM) for which the Qur’ān explicitly threatens eternal damnation (see ETERNITY; ESCHATOLOGY), at least in cases where the victim is a believer in God, as in Q 4:93, “Whosoever intentionally kills a believer is punished in hell (see HELL AND HELLFIRE), to dwell therein forever, with the anger of God and his curse (q.v.); and God prepares for him an awful punishment” (see REWARD AND PUNISHMENT). The best reading of the Qur’ān, however, would also extend this threat to include the intentional murder of any person, simply by virtue of the victim’s humanity. This non-sectarian reading of the absolute immorality of murder (see ETHICS AND THE QUR’ĀN) is based on the general language of Q 5:32, which states in full: “Whosoever kills another — unless for murder or highway robbery (*fāsād fi l-ard*) — it is as though he has killed the whole of humanity. And, whosoever saves a life (q.v.), it is as though he has saved the whole of humanity.”

This verse appears at the end of the story of Cain and Abel (q.v.), and the Qur’ān describes this rule as having been decreed for the Children of Israel (q.v.). None of the commentators (see EXEGESIS OF THE QUR’ĀN: CLASSICAL AND MEDIEVAL), however, suggest it is limited to that group but,

instead, assume that its significance also extends to Muslims. One report attributed to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) explains this extension as follows: “Why should the blood of Jews (see JEWS AND JUDAISM) be more precious to God than our blood?” (Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, x, 239, ad Q 5:32). According to the Qur’ān, Cain killed Abel because he was jealous when his sacrifice to God was rejected but Abel’s was not. When Cain resolved to kill Abel and informed him of that intention, Abel appears in the Qur’ān to accept calmly his brother’s decision, announcing that he would rather die than kill his own brother unlawfully (see LAWFUL AND UNLAWFUL; BROTHER AND BROTHERHOOD). Indeed, Abel’s apparent willingness to submit to his brother’s plan gave pause to interpreters of the Qur’ān who argued that Abel must have defended himself. Accordingly, they agreed that he only meant that he would not kill his brother in self-defense for fear of killing him unlawfully. Alternatively, some argued that self-defense might not have been allowed at that time.

The classical commentators do not give an explicit answer about the relationship of Q 4:93, where the threat of eternal punishment for murder is expressly associated with the murder of a believer (see BELIEF AND UNBELIEF; COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY IN THE QUR’ĀN), to the more general language of Q 5:32, except by explaining how it is possible to equate the murder of one person with the murder of all humankind. Indeed, this latter problem occupies most of the attention of the commentators. Al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923; *Tafsīr*, ad Q 5:32) reports several different opinions on the meaning of this seemingly problematic analogy, beginning with an opinion attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās (d. 69/688). According to this report, *naḥs*, “person,” as used in Q 5:32, does not mean a generic person, but rather connotes either a prophet (see

PROPHETS AND PROPHETHOOD) or a religious leader (imām, q.v.). Most opinions al-Ṭabarī reports, however, suggest that the analogy is conceptual, viz. the sin of intentional murder should be deemed as monstrous as killing the whole of humanity. Al-Ṭabarī accepts this position mainly on the corroborating evidence of Q 4:93, which conclusively establishes the monstrosity of even one intentional murder. Al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209; *Tafsīr*, ad Q 5:32) further develops this argument, saying that the analogy has three plausible interpretations. The first is that humans should deem the intentional killing of even one of them as heinous as killing all of them; the second is that humans should act just as urgently to prevent the murder of one person as they would to prevent the murder of their species; and the third is that someone who is prepared to kill another intentionally for worldly gain, is prepared to kill again, and thus represents a threat to all humanity.

The question unanswered by al-Rāzī and al-Ṭabarī, however, is why the sin of murdering one person is morally comparable to killing all humanity. Al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144; *Kashshāf*, ad Q 5:32) tries to explain why this is so. He argues that all human beings share certain common attributes, namely dignity (*karāma*) and a personal right to life (*ḥurma*). An intentional murder does more than kill a single life; it also destroys a being whom God has honored and to whom God has granted this right to bodily integrity, thereby insulting something that God has honored. Thus, the relevant aspect of the analogy comes from the spiritual dignity humans enjoy as God's privileged act of creation (q.v.). Intentional murder, then, is not simply a despicable act for a fleeting gain; it is also a direct assault on God's creative plan (see also COSMOLOGY).

This last notion, while only implied by al-Zamakhsharī, is made explicit by al-

Ṭabāṭabā'ī (d. 1982). He argues that humanity, although characterized by plurality, is united by a common essence that each member of the group enjoys. It is this trait of humanity that God wants to preserve throughout time. Intentional murder is then a direct interference with God's plan to preserve the human race (see also WAR; JIHĀD; HOSTAGES; DEATH AND THE DEAD).

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Mūsā see MOSES

Musaylima

Musaylima b. Thumāma b. Kabīr b. Ḥabīb b. al-Ḥārith b. 'Abd al-Ḥārith, a leader of the Banū Ḥanīfa and rival of the Prophet. Muslim sources derisively nickname him "Musaylima the liar" (*al-kadhḥāb*, see LIE). Musaylima is a diminutive form of Maslama; this can be deduced from a verse of 'Umāra b. Ukayl (Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, iii, 26).

The basis of the rivalry between Muḥammad and Musaylima was the latter's claim to prophethood (see PROPHETS AND PROPHETHOOD). Musaylima made his people believe that he was receiving revelation from God the Merciful (*al-Raḥmān*, see GOD AND HIS ATTRIBUTES) through the angel Gabriel (q.v.). It is essential to stress that